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WORK FOR FORTIFICATION IS ELEMENTARY SCHOOLTEACHERS.

The work of providing schools and teachers for the education of the people in, in England, barely two hundred years ago, for the children of the poor had little, if any, interest in the domestic schools of that time, or in the grammar schools which followed them.

To the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge belongs the honour of starting at the end of the seventeenth century with some attempt at organization, schools for the poorest classes - for girls as well as boys - a practical method of showing belief in the principle "that all who are born men have a right to be trained to all that is human"; and also in the fact that women, however poor their station, have intellectual capabilities, and a right to be taught. The scope of these schools was undoubtedly narrow and their results poor; still their very existence tended to break up the selfish indifference of the richer classes as to the mental condition of their poorer brethren. There seemed to have been a difficulty in supplying teachers for these first elementary schools, although the students of universities were by no means idle. For disputation, writing and arithmetic were not a specialty; it was enough if they could read, be teachable, and had some knowledge of the Scriptures. It was fully a century before the training of teachers was considered necessary. In the meantime the part of the children was shared by the older-established dame-schools, so vividly pictured in Bunston's "Schoolmaster's", and by the Jesuits' schools, which were too often in the hands of teachers "who had turned to the work because all other work had turned from them". About the middle of the eighteenth century, the feeling of sympathy and responsibility which had begun to influence public opinion in the relations between rich and poor, bore fruit in the establishment of Sunday schools, which started the work of bridging over the wide gulf which had hitherto divided class from class. The heavy blow of the hard battle fought by the educational pioneers of this time (some of them, by the way, cultivated gentlemen); of the tears of the farmers' lost all "poor" should be indulged by these labourers becoming better educated. The "poor" of the 18th century meant that "the poor were forced to be ignorant and stupid and that to teach the lower orders to write, was to teach them to commit forgery"; one of the prejudices and unwillingness of the people themselves. But in spite of all, the desire for elementary education was spreading, public benevolence was growing clearer, and early in the present century the National Society and the British and Foreign began to build schools all over the country, and the first infant schools were started. Now the great work

unusually small itself. The schools might be small, the teachers few, but there could be enough capable teachers to handle the educational system and be satisfied. In 1896 the New York and Colorado Colleges began to train teachers at \$100 per month only; in fifteen years' time, twenty-five training colleges were in work on order, and six thousand pupil-teachers were receiving their apprenticeship in the art of teaching in the New numerous elementary schools.

The formation of the Education Department in 1896, gave a new era of great progress, from which dates the rapid development of the whole fabric of organized state education for the people, with its inspectors, graded, credits to schools and training colleges, compulsory attendance, and blue books.

Formerly it was thought that if a gentleman had to earn his living by teaching, it must be in an appropriate family or ladies' school, and there was still to be found those who would consider it a loss of position to teach in an elementary school, possibly on account of the nature of the instruction given, or from the class of children taught, or from the associations connected with the work, "National Schoolmistresses". Still the idea that gentleman should consider teaching as remunerative, or well as useful work in teaching the children of the poor, is no new and untried one.

As long ago as 1872, Miss Hubbard and Sir J. Kay Phillips were fully and earnestly advocated this principle, and it is on the grounds that the children themselves would derive much benefit from the gentle cultured training they would receive from constant association with well-taught, high-principled ladies, and also that the ladies themselves would be able to do more satisfactory and remunerative work in a State-paid and governed school, than they could in the uncertain and imperfect dependency of private governesses. The chief advocates pointed out by Miss Hubbard still exist, and are indeed proved and justified by gentlemen who have since taken to the work. The pay ranges upwards from \$65 per annum in the country, or \$75 under U.S.C., where a subject fresh from college has begun as assistant, with the responsibility of one class only, up to \$100 or even more as head mistress of a large and important school. Frequently too, in the country there is the advantage of a school house, in which one can work pleasantly alone. The hours of teaching are short, usually 40 or even 30 hours daily, with leisure evenings, and generally a free Saturday and Sunday; whereas the prospect of working, together with a definite yearly programme of work to be done, gives hope, zest, and purpose to the daily round.

One of the disadvantages of the work, spoken of by those actually engaged in it, is the difficulty experienced by men in handling large numbers of children; for classes in large schools have only one or six fifty to sixty scholars. They have no apprenticeship as pupil teachers, ladies have their own experience in this art of teaching numbers to content

with the way in which the children in the classroom, and there is nothing for it but immediately to be engaged in getting hold of the children and lead some of the children, and controlling their attention to interesting, well-taught lessons. The strain of this sort of work is often severely felt, also the physical discomforts arising from heat, draughts and poor surroundings, especially in large cities; but still above and beyond all fatigue, inconvenience, loneliness, and the like is certainly that the work needs doing, that the children to improve, is simply, for they are being trained and educated, not "drained" simply to pass time, interesting in this brings us to the question, what manner of work is likely to be successful in elementary school work, and what special qualifications and training must the teacher have?

In the first place, she must be truly "gentle", not "harsh"; she must be robust in health, both of body and mind, to stand the physical fatigue and exertion that belong to the profession, especially till the end of which part of experience be gained. Added to this, she will need enthusiasm for the work, with an intimate knowledge of matters affecting the working class, and a humble belief in the principle that "that which art thou most powerful in the condition of a school, is the character of the teacher".

When Miss Hubbard visited the scheme of ladies working as elementary teachers, she also observed the training of a training college, especially arranged and intended for women, and in providing general education and culture, thorough technical training. Bishop Cator College, Chichester, opened in 1871 for the training of ladies as elementary schoolmistresses, was the result of her energy and energy. The building are delightfully situated between Chichester and the South Downs, every possible arrangement for the health, comfort, and well-being of the students is successfully carried out and provided for. There are very few of the two hundred or more students who have passed through the college since 1871 who do not look back upon their period of "training" as a very happy and profitable time, full of interesting associations, new ideas, and mental growth. The college course, which covers two years, is founded on the syllabus issued by the Education Department.

Students, who must be over sixteen, usually pass the preliminary examination in July, and enter college in the following January, as Queen's Scholars. The fees are £30 per annum. These Queen's scholars sign an agreement to reside in college for three years, and afterwards to teach in elementary schools until they have passed their permanent certification. Usually this takes two or three years. Private students, who do not sit for the scholarship, also enter in January, and generally stay two years. They pay £20 per annum, and sign no agreement.

The majority of students trained in the college, most of whom work or teach abroad, are earning a comfortable independence, while many are engaged in their work. Surely, then, this

employment of labor in all matters which may be considered a legitimate opening for the energies of honest and capable workers, who are doing what they can towards the great end of lowering the cost of life still further together.

Charles C. C.

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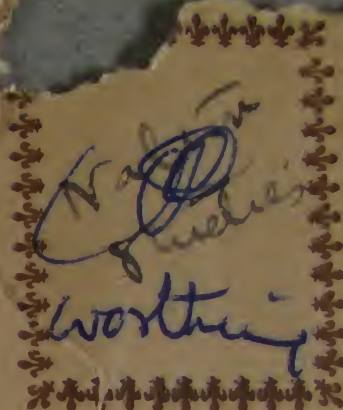
The Parents' Union School,

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1861-1950



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